

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended): A method for managing a transition between a ring protection and a span protection in a telecommunications network with a ring topology protected by a traffic protection mechanism in which signals arranged as byte frames are transmitted by nodes or network elements via spans of optical fibers connecting the network elements to form working channels and protection channels, the method comprising:

sending suitable ring failure signals of said ring protection by the nodes or network elements adjacent to a span protected by said ring protection;

verifying that only the protection channels of said span have been restored;

maintaining said ring protection of said span, for a predetermined time, when the verification is positive; and

managing said transition from said ring protection to said span protection for said span, after said predetermined time.

2. (currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein in maintaining the ring protection for said span for said predetermined time, one of the nodes or network elements adjacent to the span protected by the ring protection, seeing the ring protection on the working channels, activates a timer inside of said one of the nodes or network elements.

3. (currently amended): The method according to claim 2, wherein managing the transition from said ring protection, as to the span protection, is not started before the expiration of said timer.

4. (currently amended): A ring network element capable of managing ~~the~~ a transition between a ring protection and a span protection in a telecommunications network with a ring topology protected by a traffic protection mechanism in which signals arranged as byte frames are transmitted, said ring network element comprising:

nodes or network elements; and

spans of optical fibers connecting the nodes or network elements to form the ring network via working channels and protection channels, wherein the nodes or network elements further comprise:

means for generating and sending suitable ring failure signals of said ring protection, for a span protected by said ring protection;

means for verifying that only the protection channels have been restored on said span;

means for maintaining the ring protection of said span, for a predetermined time, when the verification is positive; and

means for managing said transition from said ring protection to said span protection for said span, after said predetermined time.

5. (currently amended): The ring network element according to claim 4, wherein said means for maintaining the ring protection, for said predetermined time, ~~comprises~~ utilizes a timer inside one of the nodes or network elements.

6. (canceled).

7. (currently amended): A computer-readable medium having a program recorded thereon, and said computer-readable medium comprising program code means adapted to carry out ~~the method according to any one of claims 1 to 3~~ instructions when said program is run in a computer, said instructions comprise:

sending suitable ring failure signals of a ring protection by the nodes or network elements adjacent to a span protected by said ring protection;

verifying that only protection channels of said span have been restored;

maintaining said ring protection of said span, for a predetermined time, when the verification is positive; and

managing a transition from said ring protection to a span protection for said span, after said predetermined time.